NAQCC News

Jul 28, 2007	NAQCC Web Site	Issue #051

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1. CHALLENGE: Our August challenge is sort of a rag chewing challenge. We challenge you to not only make QSO's, but to make more meaningful QSO's by finding out more about the ham you are working. Also this month we inaugurate another prize. Everyone who completes the challenge and reports their results according to the rules is entered into a drawing. There will be one drawing each month among those who completed that month's challenge. The winner will receive a beautiful hand-crafted set of bug or paddle handle pieces donated by their maker Gregg, WB8LZG. Once someone wins, they become ineligible for future drawings. Gregg prefers that NAQCC officers are also eligible for his pieces, so those officers who wish to be included in the drawing will be. Because of that, Gregg himself will do the drawings in a random method of his choosing to avoid any conflict of interest. We currently have 13 sets of pieces here, so there are several chances to win a set. Here's an example of one of the sets. There are many varieties. Click here to see more.

If you have an idea for a challenge, please let us know and we'll consider it.

Full Challenge info here.

2. JULY SPRINT RESULTS: Our July sprint provided some real competition for the many awards available including the set of Books in CW on CD. This month's set was won by K4BAI. The donor of the CD's is Chuck Adams, K7QO who is doing the mailing of the CD's to the winner. If you didn't win this month, there are many more chances to win as we'll be doing this each month, and the previous winners become ineligible as are club officers. So hone up your contesting skills and make plans now for the August sprint.

Our winners were:

CD's - K4BAI
1st SWA - K3WWP
1st Gain - K4BAI
Special Award (Most USA call areas worked) - K4CZ
Top Non-Winner - W1PID

Those who used the new version of GenLog and sent in their log or who used our report form correctly really made it easy on me. However a few of those who sent the GenLog file either did not include the required summary line, used the GenLog summary file, or made up something on their own, all of which made more work for me. Many thanks to all who did both the log and summary line correctly and made it a simple cut and paste job for me.

Congratulations to all including winners and non-winners. Actually everyone who participated and sent in a log is a winner because the listing of your results on our web site shows the ham radio world that you are interested in preserving CW on the ham bands. That's one of our main goals here at the NAQCC.

We had 4 stations who didn't submit a log show up from 6 to 34 times in the 36 logs we received and cross-checked. Hopefully those 4 and many others will be back next month AND submit a log.

We welcome 6 hams who submitted a sprint log for the first time. We hope these folks will

continue to participate and report their results: N0JRN, KC9HGW, VE3EDX, W7JWA, KB3FJJ, N5KEV.

Thanks to the following who have submitted a log in more than half of our 33 sprints: K4BAI (19), K3WWP (33), W9CC (18), KD2MX (17), W2LJ (27), KA2KGP (27)

For the first time in our 33 sprints, someone objected to our reporting their errors that we found in cross checking the logs. So perhaps I had better explain the purpose of doing so again. First of all, we believe to be fair to all participants, logs must be cross checked. There is too much room for error if this is not done. This is done in all of the major contests, and we feel it only right to do so in our sprints as well since we hope many who enter our sprints as their first contests will move on to the bigger contests and sprints. Since we do cross check logs, we feel it is only right to report the errors we find for the following reasons. 1. It is possible we made an error ourselves in the cross checking. This gives the station involved a chance to appeal. I wish all contests did this. Currently there are only a couple who do, and personally I really appreciate it. 2. Reporting errors helps participants to learn what errors are checked for in a complete cross checking procedure. This way, the participant learns what to look for and check in their logs before they submit them. 3. It is important in QSLing, awards submissions, and even in any possible FCC proceedings that a ham have an accurate log. Reporting errors helps the participant to be sure that his log is accurate. Remember other contests will penalize errors even to the point of disqualification and barring further participation. We do not penalize anything, merely report it. However we do make any scoring changes that result from errors such as a miscount of multipliers or the like. Finally there is no intent to criticize or put down anyone for making errors. None of us is perfect, and making errors is a part of life. Often making an error is the best way to learn something.

Overall response to our cross checking and error reporting has been overwhelmingly favorable. Each month we receive at least a couple emails thanking us for making the corrections.

Full sprint info here.

3. LATEST BEAR HUNT NEWS: We should have a sked posted for a bear operation from Utah for 7/30 - 8/03 by Bruce WY7N. It will be nice to have a bear roaming the woods again.

From our Bear Master Ron, K5DUZ:

Full bear hunt info here.

4. FEATURED AWARD OF THE MONTH: Each month in our end-of-the-month newsletter we are going to talk a bit about one of our awards.

This month it's the 30-30 Award. This award evolved from our popular 30-30 challenge. It's concept is very simple. All you need to do is to make 30 QSO's on 30 meters in one calendar month for the basic 30-30 Award. If you do it for any 3 months in a year, that earns you the 30-30 Magnum Award.

30 meters has become somewhat of a neglected band of late for whatever reason. Propagation is good there most of the time, but often no one is there to take advantage of it. That's one of the purposes behind this award - to increase activity on 30 meters. If we don't

use the band we will lose it just like we lost a lot of CW space on 80 meters due to inactivity on CW. We hope you'll check out and work for this award. As always, read and be familiar with the complete rules before embarking on earning this or any award.

Full NAQCC Awards info here.

North American QRP CW Club
30-30 Magnum Award
This is to certify that
NAQCC
has met the requirements for the NAQCC 30-30 Magnum Award by making 30 30M QSO's during each month:
Nr. _____ Date _____
signed
Awards Chairman

QRP QRP

4a. LATEST AWARD WINNERS:
800 point endorsement for the Advanced Worked Members Award - John, K3WWP

1000 MPW #0031 to Dennis, AK5D for a QSO with V73NS.

Full List of all award winners here.

QRP QRP

5. GENERAL CLUB NEWS: Thanks for the comments on the newsletter like this one from KD8CQP #1847 - "Thanks for the news letter. I'm still practicing my CW and I'm looking forward to being on the air soon. I enjoy the news letter and the club is a great inspiration."

- Remember every time you participate in a contest that has a soapbox, that's an excellent chance to sneak in a plug for the NAQCC. Perhaps someone will see it and join the club in our effort to preserve CW and QRP on the bands. See my (K3WWP) soapbox comments for the IARU Championships here for example.

- We're still waiting to sign up member #2,000 and see who wins our code study CD's prize. Club growth has slowed a bit of late for whatever reason - summer doldrums perhaps. So those who guessed a bit later dates are probably going to be the winners. If you guessed an earlier date, better get out there and do some recruiting. HI.

- As Tom mentioned in the last newsletter, we have received the special event call of N3A to be used the whole month of October for the NAQCC's third anniversary. So far no one has expressed the slightest interest in operating the special event call. I fail to understand that. I had a ball operating N3A last October. It was wonderful to be so popular on the bands. We'll extend the deadline till the end of August. Perhaps you don't understand that you operate the call from your own station. You don't have to travel somewhere to do it. If you want to operate N3A for a day or so during October let us know via email. If we don't hear from anyone, I guess we club officers will have all the fun this year as we did last year.

- We hope a lot of you operated the FISTS summer sprint. I got in it briefly and made a few QSO's. I also reported my results mentioning the NAQCC as I did with the IARU Championships. There are 3 more FISTS events coming up in September. We'll be mentioning them here in the newsletter as the time draws near. The NAQCC appreciates what FISTS is doing and has done to promote CW use on the bands, and we are proud to co-operate with this wonderful organization.

- For the past couple months now, some members have come forward with their pictures and

bio as featured members for our web site pictures page. We appreciate that and encourage other members to do so as well.

If you don't want to send a full scale picture and bio, you're welcome to send a small face shot for our member gallery. The pictures are 120 x 120 pixels in size, but we can re-size any good quality facial picture except something that is too very small. Just email us a .jpg file and we'll fix it up and post it in the gallery.

- Our club activity days seem to have drawn no interest whatsoever despite the members' request for such a type of activity. There is a page on the web site dealing with the club activity days. We hope you'll check out and comment on the following: Activity Days.

- Last newsletter we mentioned Tom has something big and important planned for the club and promised more info this issue. Well, Tom is still working on the project and we don't want to release any info till it is complete, so.... Stay tuned to this newsletter for details when they are released.

6. MEMBER NEWS: This section of the newsletter is really picking up steam now. Let's keep it going. The newsletter readers enjoy hearing what their fellow members are doing, and especially like to see you pictures here.

We've received the following news items for this issue. Is yours among them? Send your news to our news editor Paul KD2MX at **KD2MX@ARRL.NET**.

- **From Paul, KD2MX #1091** - Please help promote the NAQCC and QRP CW.

Do you have a ham radio related web page? By providing a link to our site from your page, you can help promote our club. Just cut and paste the following to your web site:

Check out the NAQCC website

- **From Karl, N3IJR #1770** - So we all thought CW was dead in the Military? I recently was talking to a fellow worker about Morse Code. He was telling me his Father knew code, but he was not a ham. He is an officer in the Army, and he just recently came back from Iraq. I was very happy to hear that the Army STILL uses Morse Code, as it is the only means of communication that the terrorist can't jam. They use it for troop movements and it is sent in code as they did in WW2. No paddles or straight keys, but it is Morse Code.

Also at a recent local club meeting I was sharing this with the guys at the meeting, and one of the guys was saying that the Coast Guard and Navy were bringing back Morse Code, because much of the Satellite Communications can be undependable. SO is CW dead? I don't think so! CW is Forever! 73 es 72 Karl

- **From Rich, W2RDD #1655** - I've had a new FT-817ND in the shack for a while now. What a great rig. Liked it so much I went and purchased another. I continue selling off my QRO rigs to finance my committment to QRP-only transceivers. Anyway, the little Yaesu is wonderful, though it takes some getting used to, if you are not familiar with deep-dish menus.

I am not and am concentrating on the CW mode right now. I feel the best way of understanding the FT-817 is to thououghly learn one facet at a time. So, as a 100% CW op, naturally I went to that operation first.

I would suggest that new owners try that method also. Additionally, I found that writing out my own crib notes in clear english helps me get around an instruction manual that I find, at my age, a little confusing. The notes will always be with me stapled to the inside back cover of the instruction manual.

Read my own FT-817 review and that of others on the you-know-what ham radio site.

Anyway, late afternoon yesterday I heard a Northern Ireland op calling CQ on 30 meters. Called him and he immediately came back to me with a report of 579. He didn't know at the time, that I was running about 5 watts to a whip antenna out the window. He was impressed. I was even more impressed. After the QSO I leaned back and looked at that little transceiver with great wonder and respect. I know the DX won't always be that good and frequent, but the pleasure was very intense just for that very reason.

By the way, this is not a commercial for Yaesu. It is a commercial for 5 watts to a whip antenna. Any decent 5-watter could have done it. It is a commercial for QRP and the sense of wonder and satisfaction that comes from making a contact...any contact...anywhere, following the NAQCC philosophy of small rigs and modest antennas.

Before I forget, my personal page has changed so if you would like my new file is:
http://richardw2rdd.googlepages.com/

So for now 73 es GL Rich

From Barry, K4CZ #0962 - I started operating CW in early 2005, shortly after earning my General license. An elmer had suggested I start with a straight key so I bought a Speed-X. However, within a year I had switched to a paddle and my Speed-X was put on a shelf and dusted off once a year for Straight Key Night.

Recently, I decided to go back to basics (and improve my NAQCC sprint scores!) by starting to use a straight key again. I've been using my Speed-X for lots of QSOs but have been frustrated to find that my straight key sending is stuck at 12-13 wpm (even though my copying speed is about 17-18wpm). Sending with a straight key seems much, much harder than a paddle.

With my paddle (a Begali Simplex), I like close spacing and a light touch. I tried setting my Speed-X the same way but it seems like what works for a paddle does not translate to a straight key (at least my straight key). The Speed-X is hard to fine tune and the feel is a bit "mushy" (not crisp like the Begali) so it's sometimes hard to send each letter precisely and by the end of a sprint, I feel like my hand and arm will take days to recover ;-).

I tried changing my grip on the knob as well as my arm position. Sometimes I put the key toward the back of the desk and rested my hand and forearm on the desk. Other times, I put the key near the front edge and kept my arm and hand in the air. Surprisingly, I think I liked the latter approach better. I also read the suggestions on K3WWP's webpage http://k3wwp.com/cw_ss_straight_key.html, but I already seemed to be following those suggestions when I have my forearm on the table.

During the NAQCC sprints, I hear lots of ops who sound very good with a straight key so I thought that I would ask for tips and suggestions from the club members. What works for you? How does your straight key sending speed compare with your copying speed? How does your straight key sending compare with your paddle sending? Has a high quality straight key made a big difference? Do you have a particular technique that has helped you? Do you practice off the air? If you started with a straight key then switched to a paddle and then re-started with

straight key, was there an adjustment/training period that you had to go through?

Please send any suggestions or comments to k4cz(at)arrl.net. If I get enough helpful or interesting responses, I'll post them in the next NAQCC newsletter. 73, Barry K4CZ

- **From Mike, AF4LQ #0020** - After some absence, it's sure nice to be enjoying the monthly Sprints again. Even though I'm usually only able to work the last hour, it's an hour that I look forward to each month and it's truly my favorite operating event. I really enjoy the group we have and the friendly relaxed atmosphere of the sprints, and the emphasis on straight keys.

The NAQCC is largely responsible for my renewed interest in using a straight key again, not just in the sprints but for regular general operating as well. I've been working on improving my straight key sending in the process. I originally learned on a straight key and got pretty good with it, but then I turned to paddles and didn't touch a key for nine years. Now I'm relearning how to use a key again, and I'm making progress though I still often try to send too fast and I need to work on sending more steady and deliberately. I think that unconsciously I've been trying to mimic the sound of a keyer because that's what I'm used to and I'm working to break myself of that habit. Anyway, I really enjoy sending with a straight key again both in the sprints and in regular daily operating and I'm determined to regain my skill with it. Thanks for the motivation!

- **From John K3WWP #0002** - I finally got another 100 points in our NAQCC Worked Members Award to reach the 800 point level. I find this award fascinating to work on because of the different point levels assigned to QSO's. Frankly the other clubs' awards where you just basically count the number of members worked are somewhat boring. I apparently am in a small minority however since less than a handful of members have earned even the minimum 200 point level of the award and above the 300 point level, I'm all by myself so far. Tell you what, I'll waive the $3.00 award fee for the next member who qualifies for this award. I'm speaking of the ADVANCED Worked Members Award. We have two classes of this award now, remember. The BASIC WMA emulates the other clubs' awards where you basically just count the number of members worked. So far no one has tried for that award. I'm not going to bother with it myself since I love the ADVANCED WMA so much.

The publication of our next newsletter will be announced via email to all members for whom we have a valid email address unless you specifically have unsubscribed from the email.

Past on-line newsletters beginning with issue #042 are now archived on the site. So if you missed seeing any past issues, you can check them out in the archives.

If you came directly to this newsletter, we invite you now to browse the NAQCC Web Site.